

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE  
IN RE THE APPLICATION OF:

Cotton et al.

Application No: 09/783,367

Filing Date: February 14, 2001

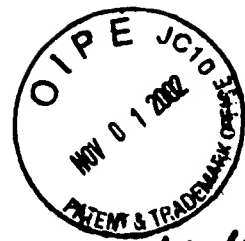
APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR  
ADJUSTING THE PRE-LOAD OF  
A SPRING

Grp. Art. Unit: 2834

Examiner: Medley, P.

Date: October 17, 2002

Atty. Dkt. No: 99-617



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RESPONSE TO FIRST OFFICE ACTION

In response to the Office Action dated July 22, 2002,  
please consider the following amendment and remarks.

In the claims

Please cancel claims 1-19 without prejudice.

Please add new claims 20-31 as follows:

20. A spring biased mechanism comprising:

a moveable element;

a biasing spring operably coupled to bias said  
element toward a predetermined position with a spring preload  
force;

a spring preload force adjuster including a  
piezoelectric device operably coupled to said spring; and  
said spring preload force being at least partially  
a function of a voltage applied to said piezoelectric device.

21. The mechanism of claim 20 including an  
electrical actuator operably coupled to said moveable element  
in opposition to said biasing spring.

I certify that this paper or fee was mailed with sufficient postage via first class mail on the 17th day of October, 2002 to the Assistant Commissioner for  
Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231; Name Printed: Carrie Strenning; Signature Carrie Strenning